

# **Strengthening Hawaii Families**

## **Brief Program Description**

Strengthening Hawaii Families (SHF) is a culturally relevant, family-focused prevention program designed by the Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii (CDFH) of Honolulu, Hawaii. The program targets Pacific Island and Asian youth and their parents. SHF prevents substance abuse and related problems by improving family relationships and functioning, parenting skills, and children's social skills and by reducing behavioral problems among children. The prevention intervention is based on evidence demonstrating the link between poor family functioning and alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use as well as literature delineating risk and protective factors unique to Pacific Island and Asian families with elementary school-aged children.

The SHF program is presented in 14 consecutive weekly sessions, each lasting two and a half hours. The SHF program includes three training components: a parent skills training program, a children's skills training program, and a family skills training program. Trained facilitators from the community work with the families to cover the following topics: exploring and practicing family values, cultural and generational continuity, creating a family vision, goal setting, personal and family resilience, communication, making choices, problem-solving, limit setting, anger management, wellness including substance abuse prevention, healthy lifestyle choices, and `ohana (family) time

A pretest-posttest nonequivalent control group design will be utilized to evaluate the effectiveness of SHF. Data collection is currently underway; therefore, results and findings are pending project completion. Preliminary data analyses reveal several positive outcomes associated with program participation.

## **Strategies**

The SHF model provides the tools and process for elementary-school aged children and families to build on existing strengths through clarification of family and cultural values, family skills building, and nurturing connections among families, schools, and their communities. A standardized curriculum is used to deliver program content to groups of six to ten families attending weekly two-hour meetings. Through guided discussions, hands-on activities, and group sharing, SHF provides a framework within which families can discover what works best for them to improve family functioning and offers tools that can be used to strengthen family relationships.

**Population**

SHF targets Asian and Pacific Island elementary school children (primarily between the ages of 8 - 11) and their families. Parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles and/or anyone living in the household are encouraged to attend the Strengthening Hawai'i Families program.

**Suitable Settings**

SHF can be implemented in urban, suburban, and rural communities settings, as well as elementary schools, and public housing.

**Required Resources**

The following materials are available from the Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawaii:

- Strengthening Hawaii Families facilitator manual
- Strengthening Hawaii Families curriculum
- Workbooks for children, parents, and the family

Additional materials needed to run the program include arts and crafts supplies, a taro or other type plant which is symbolically used to represent the nurturing and care needed for families, and treasure box items (toy telescope, candle, clear stone, shell lei, etc.). The provision of food and refreshments, childcare, transportation, and incentives add to the success of the program.

**Implementation Timeline**

The Strengthening Hawaii Families curriculum is delivered by a team of four facilitators who are certified by CDFH through a two-day on-site Training of Facilitators. CDFH staff are also available to provide technical assistance and consultation on implementation, adaptation, and replication of the SHF program model.

The curriculum-based intervention requires 14 weeks to implement. Six to ten families attend weekly two-hour meetings. Experiential exercises, role-plays, direct practice of skills, didactic presentations, storytelling, and group discussions are used to deliver the prevention intervention.

**Outcomes**

Preliminary analyses of SHF-related outcomes reveal that the program is effective in achieving the following:

- Significant reductions in family conflict
- Significant improvements in family cohesion and family organization
- Significant improvement in family communication

## **Contact Information**

For indepth information on this program, please use the contact listed below.

### **Program Developer**

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